

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-8 are pending. Claims 7-8 are added herewith. Support for the new claims is set forth below.

**Applicants' Response to the Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102**

Claims 1, 3, 4 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by *Chien et al.* (6,439,835). In response thereto, applicants had amended claims 1 and 3 in the Amendment of September 6, 2006 to more distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention. Specifically, applicants have included the feature that only the step portion includes a means for forming a gap wherein only the step portions of stacked impellers would be in contact. Chien is relied on by the Office for its disclosure of an impeller 7 with a blade 71 located between a front wall 711 and a rear wall 712. The Office interprets the rear wall 712 as equivalent to the main plate 10 of applicants' invention.

In regard to the rear wall 712 of Chien, as disclosed in Figs. 4-8, the rear wall slopes as it approaches the boss hole area. The Office considers this slope the equivalent of a step portion. This sloping portion is rounded (i.e. there are no sharp angles which would form a step). As illustrated in Fig. 3 of the application, the step portion 14 has a sharp angle. The stacked main plates rest only on the sharp angle to form the gap d. However, in Chien, since the rear wall 712 has a rounded slope with no sharp angles, if the rear wall plates 712 were stacked they would fit together uniformly. Thus the rear wall plates 712 would stack similarly to the main plates 110 described in Fig. 6 of the present application and would not only rest on the step portion as is

disclosed in applicants' Fig. 3. As illustrates in Fig. 3, only the step portion 14 of the adjoining plates 10 are in contact. The remainders of the plates are free of contact. The slope in the rear wall 712 of Chien's device does not constitute a step portions capable of forming a gap as required by amended claims 1 and 3, because there is no sharp angled step portion on which only contact between adjacent rearwall 712 plates would occur.

**Applicants' Response to the Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103**

Claims 2 and 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Chien et al.** As the claims depend from claims 1 and 3, respectively, by addressing the rejection of the parent claims as set forth above, the rejection of claims 2 and 5 is likewise addressed by nature of the claims' dependencies.

**New Claims 7 and 8**

New claims 7 and 8 depend from claims 1 and 3 respectively. Both are directed to the feature that the main plate is a single piece of molded metal. As disclosed on page 4, lines 10-12, of the specification a sheet metal material such as stainless steel is die-cut into a disk-like shape to form the main plate 10. This feature is not taught by Chien. In regard to the step portions, the Office cites to the integrally formed metallic impeller metal working member 721 of Chien. This is an additional piece of the impeller which is mounted on the rear wall 712 by soldering in Chien. See Col. 4, lines 26 – 29. This working member 721 is attached to a plastic member 722 which engages the shaft 5. As illustrated in Fig. 4 of Chien, the working member 721 has a rising slope as it approaches the boss hole. Hence, according to the Office, both the rear wall 712

Application No. 10/501,886  
Attorney Docket No. 042599

Response under 37 C.F.R. §1.114  
Response Filed: October 18, 2006

and the working member 721 constitute a main plate. Therefore, Chien does not teach a main plate of a single piece of molded metal.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicants submit that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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